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Established A.D. 1841.

Hongkong, 9th November, 1895.

120

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ONLY communications relating to the news columns should be addressed to THE EDITOR.

Correspondents must forward their names and addresses with communications addressed to the Editor, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

42 letters for publication should be written on one side of the paper only.

No anonymously signed communications that have already appeared in other papers will be inserted.

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BIRTH.

On the 26th Nov. at the Royal Naval Hospital, Hongkong, the wife of Surgeon Matthew O'Rourke, R.N., of a daughter.

The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, DECEMBER 9TH, 1895.

The British Government has become

thoroughly alive to the importance of

fostering British trade with the colonies and

foreign countries. A despatch has been

sent to all Colonial Governors requesting

reports on the displacement of British goods

by articles of foreign manufacture and the

reasons thereof; Mr. BYRON BIRNAN has

been appointed to conduct a similar inquiry

as regards trade with China; and pre-

sumably his appointments have been made in

other countries. Perhaps one of the reasons

for the stagnation of British trade may be

that British goods no longer excel those of

foreign countries to the extent they did in

former days, owing to the advance made by

foreign manufacturers and artisans. Not

long ago a commercial mission visited the

ironworks in Belgium on behalf of certain

English interests, and their report was that

the goods of that country did not rely solely

on cheapness to secure a market, but that

they were really good articles and that

in many respects the factories were con-

ducted on better lines than in England. So

far as that point is concerned, the Govern-

ment can afford little or no assistance and

British manufacturers and artisans must

rely on their own enterprise and exertions

to regain and maintain the front rank of in-

dustrial excellence.

But if the Continent can turn out ex-

cellent goods when required, it is also still

willing to turn out shoddy and fraudulent

imitations of British goods that have

acquired a reputation for high quality, and

the markets in Hongkong and China are

flooded with such goods, for there is prac-

tically no protection for trade marks and

correct descriptions such as is afforded by

the Merchandise Marks Act. In Hongkong

we have such an Act, nominally, but it is

practically ineffective; as there is no

machinery to work it. Fraudulently marked

goods may be brought into the colony in any

quantity, or may be marked after arrival,

unless the law is put in force by private

individuals whose interests are affected.

itself is flourishing or not, but for the

purpose of differentiating the various lines

of trade and affording information to the

house manufacturer and merchant it is

useless. Some years ago an attempt was

made to pass a Bill providing for the keep-

ing of trade statistics here, but although it

secured a large measure of support the

opposition to it was too strong and the

measure had to be abandoned. Many of

those who opposed it did so on the ground

that it would be an infringement of the

freedom of the port and that it would

outrage a feeling of insecurity amongst the

Chinese, who might perhaps be sub-

jected to measures by their own manufac-

ture in consequence of the compulsory disclosure

of their business; but the strongest oppo-

sition came from those interested in trade of

a doubtful character and who foresee a more

strict enforcement of the law against forged

trade marks. We have no reason to suppose

that the balance of public opinion has been

reversed since that time and are perfectly

aware that the view we advocate is an un-

popular one, but from the time the agitation

was started in these columns some twelve

years ago up to the present time our opinion

that one of the most urgent requirements of

British trade in the Far East is accurate

statistics of the trade passing through this

colony has never wavered. Without such

statistics it is impossible accurately to

diagnose all the diseases from which British

trade in this part of the world is suffering.

One thing that is damaging British trade,

however, stands out conspicuously, and that

is the bounty which British shipowners give

to foreign trade by carrying goods from

foreign countries at lower rates than those

charged for British goods. It is high time

legislation was adopted to put an end to such

unfair and unpatriotic discrimination. We

have on previous occasions drawn attention

to this important subject, and the opinions

there expressed are confirmed and justified by

figures which a correspondent of the Man-

chester Guardian has recently given. The

Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, when re-

cently urging the despatch of a commercial

mission to China, pointed out that since

1885 British exports to China had declined

from £8,302,493 to £3,265,318. On the

other hand American goods exported to

China have increased from 420,000 pieces

in 1880 to 720,000 in 1894, and the exports

from Dutch ports, which were 28,540 pieces

in 1891, amounted to 101,185 pieces in 1894.

The correspondent of our Manchester

contemporary after referring to companies 19th

sheetings of American mink with those of

Lancashire and says—"I find that the

average freight from Manchester to Shang-

hai, via Liverpool and London, is per piece

7-23d, while the average per piece from

New York by these two routes is only

3-82d, giving an advantage of 3-41d in

favour of America, or, in the case of

drills, very nearly 3-4d per piece. Com-

position under these circumstances becomes

very difficult, if not impossible, on our

part against American manufacturers.

The price of Lancashire sheetings and

drills of similar quality to the American

goods cost, say, 10s. per piece, and the

3-4d. difference in freight, on the cost, or

say 3 per cent, would be a rate of profit

which would be welcomed by Manchester

shippers. I desire to call the attention of

shippers to one point. Goods are taken

from New York, via Liverpool, to Shang-

hai for 28s. 9d. a ton. If we allow 10s. of

this to the New York steamer and for cost

of transhipment in Liverpool, it will leave

18s. 9d. for which the Liverpool steamer

carries three tons to Shanghai, while the

same steamer charges the Manchester ship

per identical goods no less than 47s.

6d. They either, therefore, carry the

American goods for less than will pay the

steamer, or they charge the Manchester

shippers a rate beyond all reason." In the

face of figures like these the silver question,

important as it is, sinks into comparative

insignificance. The combination of British

shipowners like a vampire is sucking the life

blood out of British trade, and of all the "rings"

recorded in commercial history none has

ever worked so prejudicially to trade as the

Steamship Combination.

The Empress of India left Yokohama for

Yuepou on the morning of the 7th inst.

The P. M. steamer Poon-ah, with 300,000 lbs.

of opium, left for this port on Friday, the 6th

inst., at noon.

The Austrian Lloyd's steamer Vindobona

left Singapore for this port on Friday, the 6th

inst., at noon.

The steamer Glenamara left Singapore on

the 7th inst. and is due here on about the

10th inst.

It is reported that the late Queen of Korea

had embraced the Roman Catholic faith a short

time before her murder.

The D. D. R. steamer Gerda, from Hamburg,

left Singapore on Saturday and may be expected

here on about the 13th inst.

The Lillian J. Robbins has been discussed off

Cape St. James and towed in to Saigon. Her

captain will take some months to effect.

It is notified in the Gazette that the Queen's

exequat has been issued empowering Don H.

Gonzalez de Castillo to act as Vice-Consul for

Spain at Hongkong.

Admiral Buller was to leave Singapore on the

30th November in the despatch ship Albatross

for Sandakan, and will probably spend some

time in North Borneo.

It is notified in the Gazette that Her Majesty

has been advised to exercise her power of

disallowance with respect to the Ordinance for

regulating the licensing of private vehicles.

The M. D. L. steamer Sachsen, with the

German mail, left the 18th November, left

Colombo on Saturday, the 7th inst., and may be

expected here on about Wednesday, the 10th

inst.

The Shanghai native papers state that the

Vietnam-Chinese-Chinese has been changing the

Shanghai-Szechwan railway to three railway

engineers, who will have the sole control of the

building of the line.

A notification appears in the Gazette with

reference to the issuance of parcels and by

parcel post to India. It is headed "Parcel post

to the United Kingdom and the principal

countries of Europe."

At the regular meeting of the United States

College, No. 1341, held on Saturday night, Mr.

Bro. W. C. H. Hastings was elected W. M.,

Mr. J. W. Watson was elected Secretary, and

Mr. J. Maxwell, Tyler.

A Peking telegram of the 30th November to

the China Gazette says—Refutations of the

Chinese view of the recent treaty have been

sent to the Japanese Minister and the

Chinese officials appointed to negotiate the

Treaty.

The M. M. steamer Sydney, with the

mail, left for Hongkong yesterday morning

at 2 o'clock.

The Spanish cruiser Reina Cristina arrived

from Manila yesterday and will go into dock at

Kowloon. She exchanged the usual salutes.

A consignment of twelve subscription gratings

arrived per steamer Tienkong on Saturday and

will be delivered at four o'clock this morning.

No news has yet been received of the Straits

ships. The Komodo is also overdue. She

left San Francisco on the 8th ult., and has

not yet arrived at Yokohama.

A serious accident happened on the 26th ult.

at Tientsin. Mr. Rogers, of the London

and Co., was thrown on the back of his head when

riding; fortunately a friend was with him and

he was promptly taken to the hospital.

The German steamer Dendro was hit by

return to Bangkok owing to a collision with

the ship. The ship was damaged and the

